2024 REC Contracts - Released for Feedback, EEC DG Capacity, MES Webinar FAQs

March 22, 2024

<u>Coming up in Illinois Shines</u> *(Program events & due dates found at the [Vendor Forums & Key Dates webpage](#))*

- Events
  - No events are scheduled for next week
- Due Dates
  - March 25, 2024 - Part II Verification Cut Off for March
  - March 27, 2024 - Draft Program Guidebook Comments Due
  - **Key Dates Relating to Program Year 2024-25 start commencing on June 3, 2024**
    - March 22, 2024 – Draft REC Contracts released for stakeholder feedback
    - March 27, 2024 – Deadline for Program Guidebook stakeholder feedback
    - April 5, 2024 – Deadline for REC Contract stakeholder feedback
    - April 19, 2024 – Final Program Guidebook, Final CP Handbook, and Final Contract Requirements will be released
    - Mid-April, 2024 – MES 2024-25 Compliance Plans window opens
    - End of April, 2024 – Final REC Contract will be released
    - May 1, 2024 – MES Year-End Reports submission window opens
    - May 27 - June 2, 2024 – Program Year 2023-24 closes
    - June 3, 2024 – Program Year 2024-25 opens and MES Compliance Plans for Program Year 2024-25 are due
    - July 15, 2024 – MES Year-End Report for Program Year 2023-24, and Annual Reports are due

<u>Stakeholder Support</u>

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – March 27, 2024 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - Individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions. Zoom link: https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co
- **Application Tips and Tricks** - Supplementing previous guidance, the Program Administrator seeks to continue supporting stakeholders in the avoidance of project applications entering *Need Info* status.
  - **Duplicate Applications** are an ongoing issue that will result in a *Need Info* request or even project removals.
    - AVs should do quality assurance checks within their list of projects to identify and eliminate duplicate projects before they are submitted.
    - Only projects that have a reasonable expectation of completion should be submitted. If an application is contracted and later removed because it is found to be a duplicate of a project completed by another AV, the REC contract provides for removal of the project and the collateral will be forfeited.

Program News – New or Updated Items (*All Program updates can be found on the* *Program Updates webpage)*

- **2024 REC Contracts - Released for Feedback – Comments are Due April 5, 2024** - Earlier today, the IPA released the draft 2024 REC Contracts for stakeholder feedback. Stakeholders can review the draft 2024 REC Contracts and redline versions of the contracts (March 22, 2024 vs 2022 Contract) on the Program Documents page. Responses are due by **April 5, 2024** and should be sent to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov. After comment review, the final versions of the REC Contracts are expected to be published on the Program website by the end of April 2024.

- **EEC DG Capacity** - In accordance with the 2022 Long-Term Plan, any unallocated capacity reserved for Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) Distributed Generation (DG) projects will become available to be allocated to either EEC Community Solar (CS) or EEC DG projects after nine months of the start of the Program Year (PY). EEC DG capacity is available to be allocated to EEC CS projects within the same Group and subject to waitlist procedures. This adjustment to capacity is effective as of March 1, 2024, which is nine months from the start of the 2023-2024 PY, which began on June 1, 2023.

- **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) 2023-24 Year-End Report Webinar and Resources** - An informational webinar on the MES 2023-24 Year-End Report was held on March 6, 2024. The recording, presentation slides, and FAQs have been uploaded to the Program Year Webinars page. As a reminder, the Program published guidance on the MES Year-End Report on February 27, 2024. The MES Year-End Report is due July 15, 2024, following the close of this PY, and encompasses reporting related to participating entities' Illinois-based project workforce for the 2023-24 PY. Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the Program's EAS page for MES resources and may request support from the Program Administrator by emailing MES@illinoisshines.com.

- **IPA Requests Stakeholder Feedback on Equity Accountability System Assessment – Comments are Due April 10, 2024** - On March 21, 2024, the Agency requested stakeholder feedback on the Equity Accountability System Assessment. Please provide comments via email attachment to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov with the subject "[Responder's Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on EAS Assessment" by **April 10, 2024**.

- **Dropbox Sign Service Interruption – March 30, 2024** - Dropbox Sign will be undergoing maintenance mode for one hour starting at Saturday, March 30, 2024 at 11:00 p.m. to Sunday, March 31, 2024 at 12:00 a.m. CPT. Please note that the Dropbox Sign services will not be available during this time and the Sign API service will return a HTTP 503 code. More information can be found on Dropbox Sign's website.

- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
  - MES 2023-24 Year-End Report Webinar FAQs (Program Year Webinars and EAS pages)
  - Draft 2024 15-Year REC Contract (march 22, 2024), [REDLINE] Draft ABP 15-Year REC Delivery Contract (March 22, 2024 vs. 2022 Contract), Draft 20-Year REC Delivery Contract (March 22, 2024), and [REDLINE] Draft 20 Year REC Delivery Contract (March 22, 2024 vs. 2022 Contract) (Program Documents page)

Program News – Previously Published Items (*All Program updates can be found on the* *Program Updates webpage)*

- **General Program**
  - **Draft Program Guidebook Released for Feedback – Comments Due March 27, 2024** - On March 13, 2024, the Program released the draft Program Guidebook for feedback. The announcement detailed next steps in the Program Guidebook comment and update process, including links to the draft Program Guidebook and a redline comparison between current 2023-24 Program Guidebook and draft 2024-25 Program Guidebook, that outlined high level changes to the draft Program Guidebook. Comments are due on **March 27, 2024** and should be emailed to IPA.Solar@Illinois.gov with the subject line "**2024-25 Program Guidebook Feedback**".

- o **Register for IPA Power Hour**– *Renewable Energy Projects Financing: Distributed Solar* - The Agency will host a Power Hour on March 29, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. CPT. This educational webinar will explore options and models for DG solar project financing, including key players in the industry. Presenters include IPA Director of Renewable Energy Finance, Chandrika Mital, and Partner at Environmental Resources Management (ERM), Rohan Saharia. Please visit this link to register for the event.
  - o **Project Inspections Resumption in March 2024 –** See previous announcement
  - o **Resources for EECs and Small Businesses –** See previous announcement
  - o **Final Illinois Power Agency Policy Study Published –** See previous announcement
- **Consumer Education and Protection** – See full Consumer Education and Protection hub on Program website
  - o **Annual Complaints Report Published -** On February 29, 2024, the Agency filed the 2023 Annual Complaints Report. Under the Long-Term Plan, the Agency is required to file this report annually with the Illinois Commerce Commission to document the frequency and nature of complaints related both to Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All. The report also includes details of enforcement actions taken by the respective Program Administrators related to such complaints. This year's report highlights both data surrounding complaints as well as certain trends.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **Part II Verification Cut Off for March -** To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for March will be March 25, 2024. Applications that are Part II verified on or before March 25, 2024 will be included in the April invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between March 26, 2024 and March 31, 2024 will be invoiced in May 2024.
- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings -** In advance of each submission of batches to the ICC for approval, AVs are provided the opportunity to withhold or re-batch projects. In the absence of any action by an AV, the Program Administrator will re-batch the projects at their discretion and submit eligible projects to the ICC.
  - o It is extremely important that AVs review their re-batching files on SharePoint to indicate any re-batching preferences, but especially requests to withhold projects from submission. The Program Administrator alerts AVs by email when they have projects that are eligible for re-batching and planned to be submitted to the ICC in the next memo. Unfortunately, sometimes these communications are missed, and projects are submitted to the ICC despite an AVs intent to hold a project back.
  - o The Program Administrator requests that AVs who believe they may want to withhold or re-batch projects mark their calendars and review SharePoint folders for re-batching templates. This way, if any email alerts are missed, AVs are still aware of the dates that re-batching opens and can check if any projects are in the upcoming ICC submission. Below are the next re-batching windows:

Re-Batching Opens for AVs	Election Deadline – 12:00 p.m. CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
4/2/2024	4/4/2024	4/18/2024
4/16/2024	4/18/2024	5/2/2024
4/30/2024	5/2/2024	5/16/2024
5/13/2024	5/15/2024	5/30/2024
5/17/2024	5/21/2024	6/5/2024
6/3/2024	6/5/2024	6/20/2024
6/13/2024	6/17/2024	7/2/2024
7/8/2024	7/10/2024	7/24/2024
7/16/2024	7/18/2024	8/1/2024

Application Processing Updates

- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at IllinoisShines.com/project-application-reports/. These tables are typically updated daily, but the Program Administrator is currently experiencing technical issues and data on the Project Application Reports page and it may not be updated daily. Thank you for your patience as the Program Administrator works on a solution. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates, a Portal Development Roadmap, and a library of help guides can be found at https://illinoisshines.com/portal-updates/. Portal releases will take place on Tuesday nights. Stakeholders can refer to the Portal Updates page to view the latest market facing enhancements.
- **Updates on Portal Issues, Improvements, and Future Releases –** Scheduled system maintenance windows continue on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. CPT), during which times the Portal is expected to be unavailable to users, which the Program hopes is minimally disruptive to Program participants. Users working in the portal should save their work prior to the 8:00 p.m. CPT start of system maintenance window, as any unsaved information will be lost when the system is moved into maintenance mode. In some cases, Portal availability may resume earlier than 11:00 p.m. CPT, though AVs and Designees should plan on the full three hours.

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancement		
EOL: Expose Contract Documents to AV	AVs will now have the ability to view details of their contracts and the associated document PDFs directly from the Portal. This section can be accessed by selecting Contracts -> View Contracts from the main menu.	March 20, 2024
Disclosure Forms: Multiple Price to Compare Note in CS	This enhancement adds language to the CS Disclosure Form PDF clarifying that the Price to Compare rates used for estimating savings are the utilities residential rates.	March 20, 2024
SOC2: Access Controls - Password Management - Expiration	To maintain security of the portal and its data, all registered users will now be required to update their password every 180 days. A reminder notice will be sent 10 days prior to expiration. If a registered user fails to change their password by the deadline,	March 20, 2024

	their password will become expired, and they will need to use the "Forgot Password" link on the Portal login page and enter the email address associated with their account to establish a new password. Please Note: Passwords already over 180 days in age on March 19, 2024, when this update was released will be locked out and require use of the Forgot Password option. Steps to change your password before expiration: 1) Login to the Illinois Shines Portal. 2) View your profile by selecting the person icon in the upper right corner next to your name. 3) Scroll to the bottom of your profile and select the Change Password button. 4) Enter your new password in both fields and select the Change button. 5) Once back on your profile select Save	
[CS DF] Alternative Retail Electric Supplier (ARES) energy supply rate should be in cents/kWh - PDF	ARES Rate Information on Community Solar Disclosure Forms will now be displayed in Cents/kWh to three decimal places on the PDF copies. This will allow consumers to more easily compare rates. This change is only on the PDF, AVs and Designees are advised to continue to enter ARES rates on the web-forms in $/kWh to the fifth decimal place. Conversion from dollars to cents will happen when the PDF is generated.	March 20, 2024
Bug Fix		
Part II applications created with sections marked Completed	Previously, upon Part I application submission, Part II application forms were occasionally being generated with some sections incorrectly marked as completed, causing some users to miss updating those fields at the time of Part II application submission. This issue has been corrected, and the applicable sections of Part II applications will now consistently reflect their not-started status upon creation.	March 20, 2024

Requirements and Reminders

- **Stakeholder Feedback -** This table outlines current and forthcoming proposals and feedback requests, which can also be found at the Program website:

Proposal or Feedback Topic and Link to Details	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
Draft 2024 REC Delivery Contracts	March 22, 2024	April 5, 2024	Comments should be emailed to IPA.Solar@illinois.gov.
Equity Accountability System Assessment	March 21, 2024	April 10, 2024	Comments should be emailed to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov with the subject line "[Responder's Name] – Stakeholder Feedback on EAS Assessment"
Draft Program Guidebook	March 13, 2024	March 27, 2024	Comments should be emailed to IPA.Solar@Illinois.gov with the subject line "2024-25 Program Guidebook Feedback"
Draft Policy Study Open for Public Comment	January 22, 2024	February 26, 2024	Comments received are published here. On March 1, 2024 the Agency finalized the IPA Policy Study, which is available at https://ipa.illinois.gov/ipa-policy-study.html

- **ICC Issues Final Order Approving the 2024 Long-Term Plan** - On February 20, 2024, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) issued a Final Order in which it approved the Administrative Law Judge's Proposed Order, with modifications, of the 2024 Long-Term Plan. The Final Order is available in [Docket 23-0714](#). The Agency has 60 days to publish a final 2024 Long-Term Plan that conforms to the Final Order, marking the conclusion of this process. Stakeholders can access the [filed 2024 Long-Term Plan](#) and [Redline between Draft 2024 Long-Term Plan and Filed 2024 Long-Term Plan](#) on the [Program Documents page](#) on the website; a final version of the Plan will be added when it becomes available.
- **IPA Issued Request for AVs and Installer Designees Interested in Serving Stranded Illinois Shines DG Customers** - As previously [announced](#), the Program continues to review submissions on a rolling basis for entities interested in serving stranded customers. Please see the full [Request for AVs and Designees](#), including details regarding the opportunity to support stranded customers, eligibility requirements, and anticipated responsibilities.
- **Illinois Shines Legacy Portal Retirement** – As [previously announced](#), on June 30, 2024 the Program will retired the Illinois Shines legacy Portal administered by the prior Program Administrator, after which AVs and Designees will no longer be able to access it. Please see the previous announcement for more details.

CONTACT US: For portal, application, or Program-specific questions and inquiries, please contact admin@IllinoisShines.com or call 877-783-1820.